

DC
MAXI-SERIES 8 of 12

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APPROVED
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AUTHORITY

AMETHYST

PRINCESS OF GEMWORLD



PEREZ &
COGGIN

GET THE
GIFFEN
LEGION™
POSTER!
ANOTHER
DC
FIRST!

THE MYSTERIES OF THE
GEMWORLD ARE MANY--
AND THE WAYS OF ITS
WEIRD MAGIC ARE
OBSCURE TO ALL BUT
A FEW.

THE KEEPERS OF THE
MYSTIC LAKE LIVE HERE
IN THE ENCHANTED
SANCTUARY.

--SAFE FROM THE
STORMS AND
UPHEAVALS THAT
OFTEN ROCK THIS
JEWELLED DIMENSION.

...OR DO THEY HAVE
ALWAYS THOUGHT?



THESE ARE THE EMBASSY OF HARM, WHOSE HOME IS A DISTANT
REALM THAT IS STRANGER YET THAN THE GEMWORLD'S MOST
FANTASTIC CORNER.



THE FEW WORDS THAT THEY SPEAK ARE IN A
DIALECT UNFATHOMABLE TO THE HUMAN EAR...



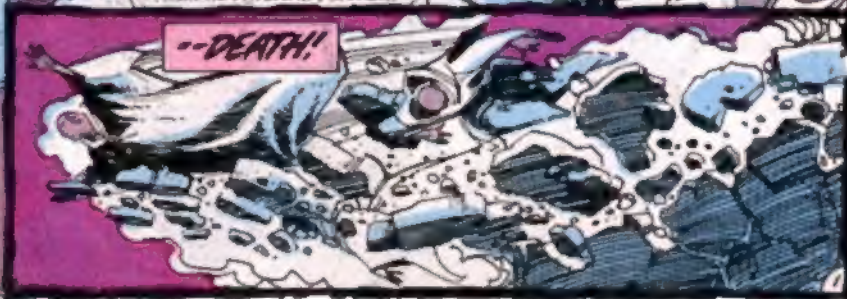
SISTER, DO YOU SENSE
THE FORCES IN THE AIR
AROUND US...?

...AND LEAVING FOR A HIGHER PLANE
OF MYSTIC UNITY! THEN
THE DAY
OF ONENESS IS ACHIEVED!
THE DAY OF--

...AS THOUGH THE MAGIC
THAT INFUSES ALL IS RISING
FROM ITS PHYSICAL FORMS.



--DEATH!



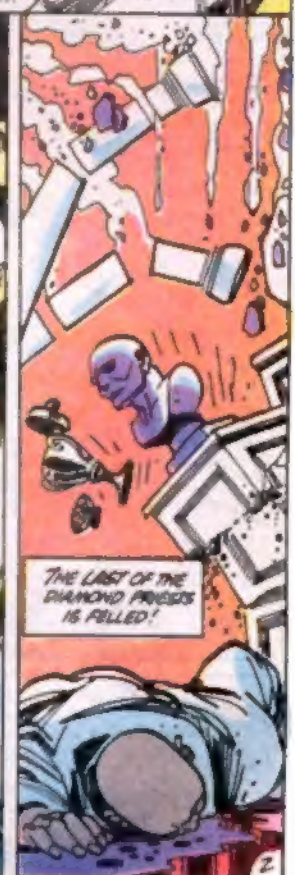
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WITHOUT, THE MIGHTY WHIRLWIND
OF DEBRIS SEEMS ENDLESS...



...ITS IMMENSITY MATCHED ONLY BY
THE APPETITE OF ITS DESTROYER!

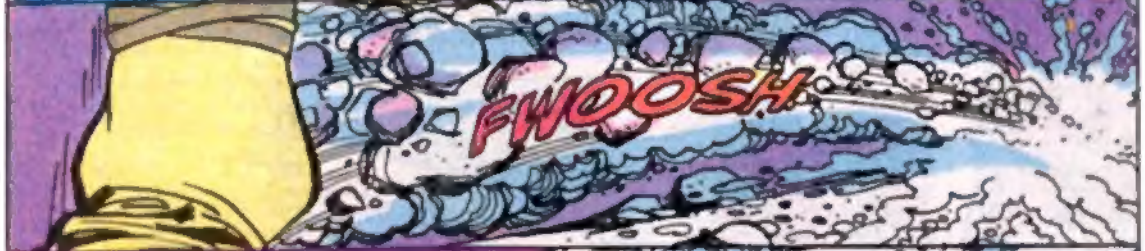
BUT AT LAST THERE
COMES A STILLNESS--



AND WHERE THE DIAMOND SANCTUARY ONCE
STOOD THERE LIES AN EMPTY PLAIN--

--THAT IS SILENT AND
BARREN AND LIFELESS--

--UNTIL--



THEIR TASK COMPLETE, THE
EMISSARIES OF WAR
TURN AWAY...



...LEAVING ONLY
DEVASTATION IN THEIR WAKE!

PLEASE?

NO,
TELL
ME...

BEING WITH YOU HAS TAKEN AWAY
MY GRIEF, AMETHYST...

VERY WELL, SINCE
YOU INSIST... BUT DON'T
THINK ME A TERRIBLE
PERSON!

WE'VE BEEN TALKING
THROUGH THE NIGHT,
ENJOYING OURSELVES...
AND I DIDN'T EVEN
THINK ABOUT MY
FATHER!

-- MUCH TO
MY AMAZEMENT --

-- BUT I DON'T WANT THE
MEMORY OF HIM TO BE TAKEN
AWAY AS WELL!

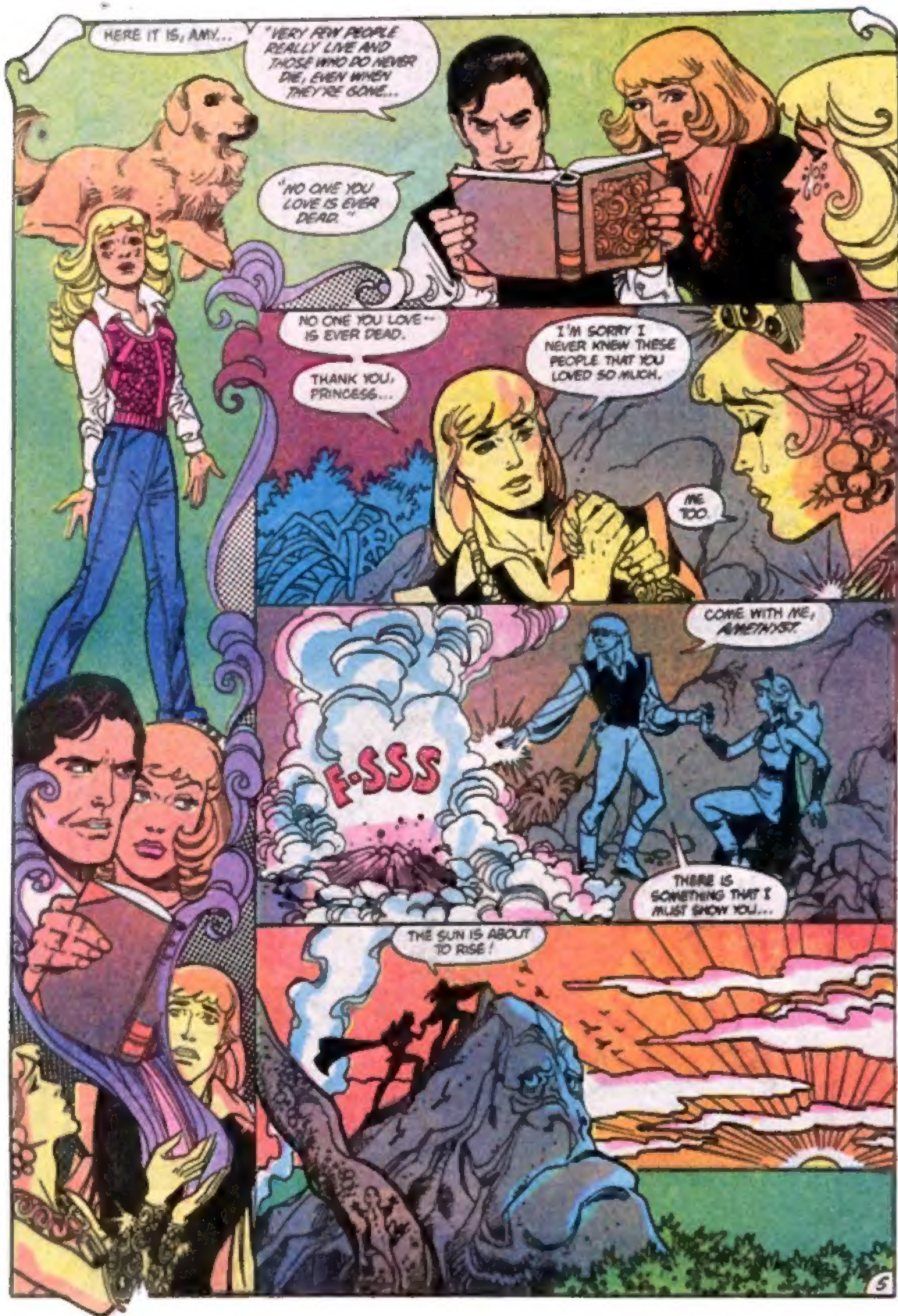
OH,
TOPAZ...

I UNDERSTAND
EXACTLY WHAT YOU
MEAN! I'M STILL SO
AWRY OVER MY
FRIEND GORANCH'S
DEATH...

AND I THINK I'M
KEEPING THE
ANGER PARTLY SO
THAT I CAN KEEP
HIM!

BUT THERE WAS
SOMETHING... WHEN
MY GRANDFATHER
DIED...

... SOMETHING
THAT MY DAD
READ TO ME
THEN...



HERE IT IS, ANY...

"VERY FEW PEOPLE REALLY LIVE AND THOSE WHO DO NEVER DIE, EVEN WHEN THEY'RE GONE..."

"NO ONE YOU LOVE IS EVER DEAD."

NO ONE YOU LOVE IS EVER DEAD.

THANK YOU, PRINCESS...

I'M SORRY I NEVER KNEW THESE PEOPLE THAT YOU LOVED SO MUCH.

ME TOO.

COME WITH ME, AMETHYST.

F-SSS

THERE IS SOMETHING THAT I MUST SHOW YOU...

THE SUN IS ABOUT TO RISE!

THIS IS
LOVELY,
TOPHIE...

--AND...

ON
MY

I TOOK A TRIP
TO ATLANTIC CITY
ONCE WITH MY
FOLKS AND--

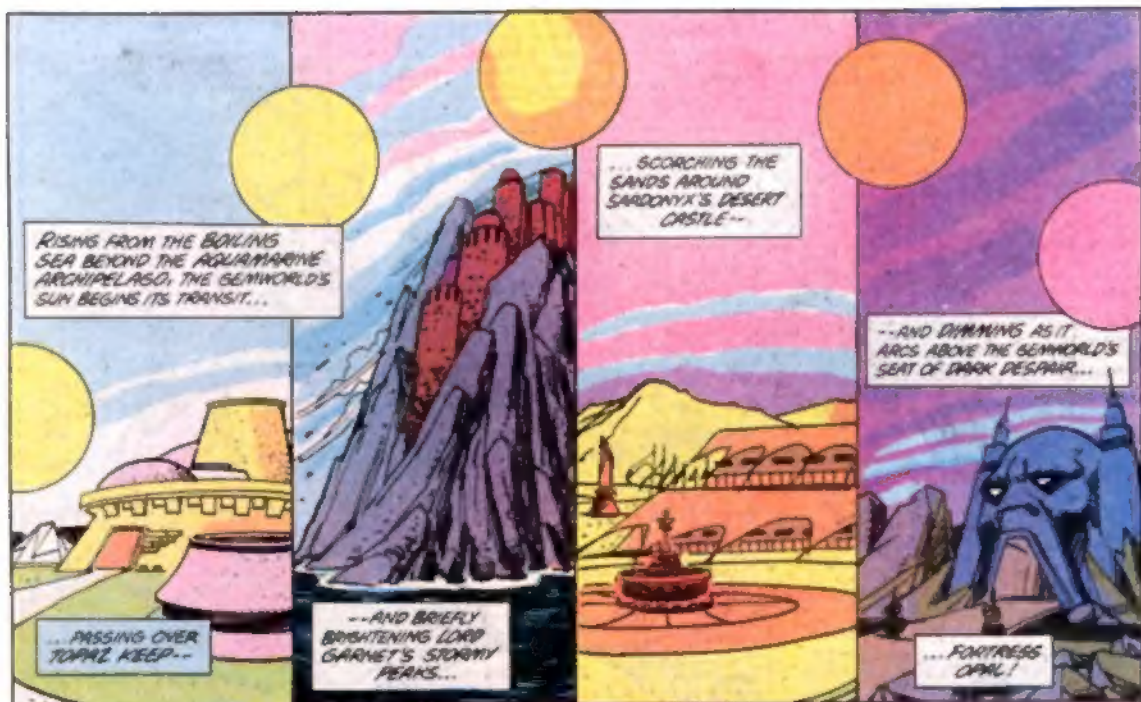
AMY WINSTON'S NIGHTS WERE FILLED WITH
DREAMS-- WITH VISIONS OF A LOST LEGACY! THEN
SHE DISCOVERED THAT SHE WAS NO CHILD OF EARTH,
BUT THE ORPHANED HEIR TO A MYSTIC THRONE...

AMETHYST



FIRST
LIGHT

Dan Mishkin & Gary Cohen Writers — CO-CREATORS —
Ernie Colón Artist
John Costanza Letterer
Tom Zuko Colorist
Karen Berger Editor



RISING FROM THE BOILING
SEA BEYOND THE AQUAMARINE
ARCHIPELAGO, THE GEMWORLD'S
SUN BEGINS ITS TRANSIT...

...SCORCHING THE
SANDS AROUND
SARDONYX'S DESERT
CASTLE...

--AND DIMMING AS IT
ARCS ABOVE THE GEMWORLD'S
SEAT OF DARK DESPAIR...

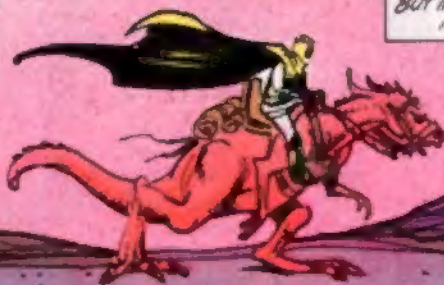
...PASSING OVER
TOPAZ KEEP...

...AND BRIEFLY
BRIGHTENING LORD
GARNET'S STORMY
PEAKS...

...FORTRESS
OPAL!

IT IS TOWARD THIS BLACK AND
EVIL PLACE THAT A SOLITARY
RIDER TRAVELS...

BUT IF HE FEELS TREPIDATION AS HE
MAKES HIS APPROACH...

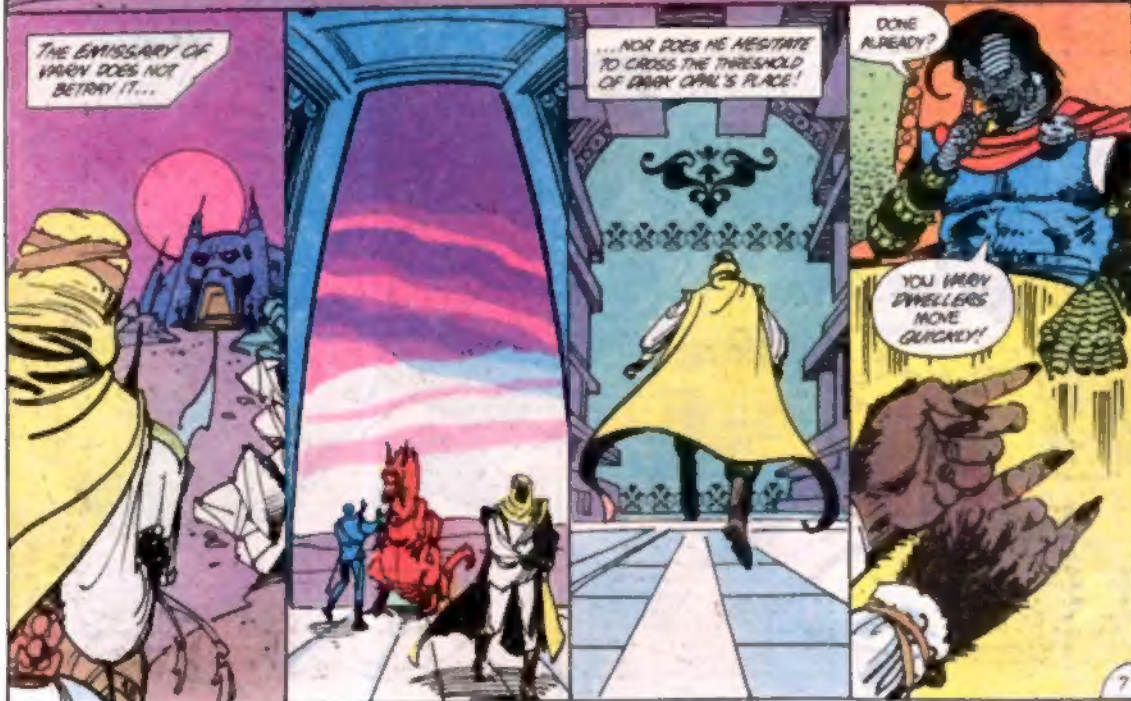


THE EMISSARY OF
VARY DOES NOT
BETRAY IT...

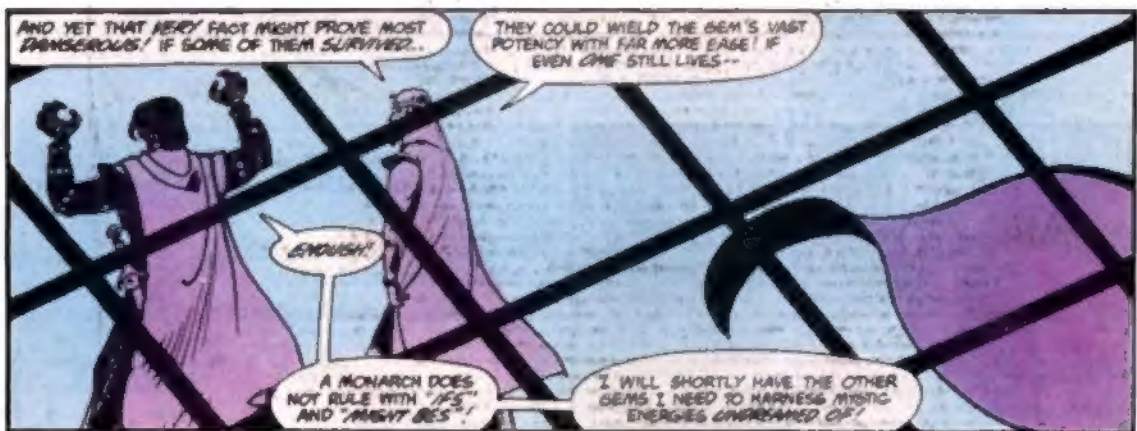
...NOR DOES HE HESITATE
TO CROSS THE THRESHOLD
OF DARK OPAL'S PLACE!

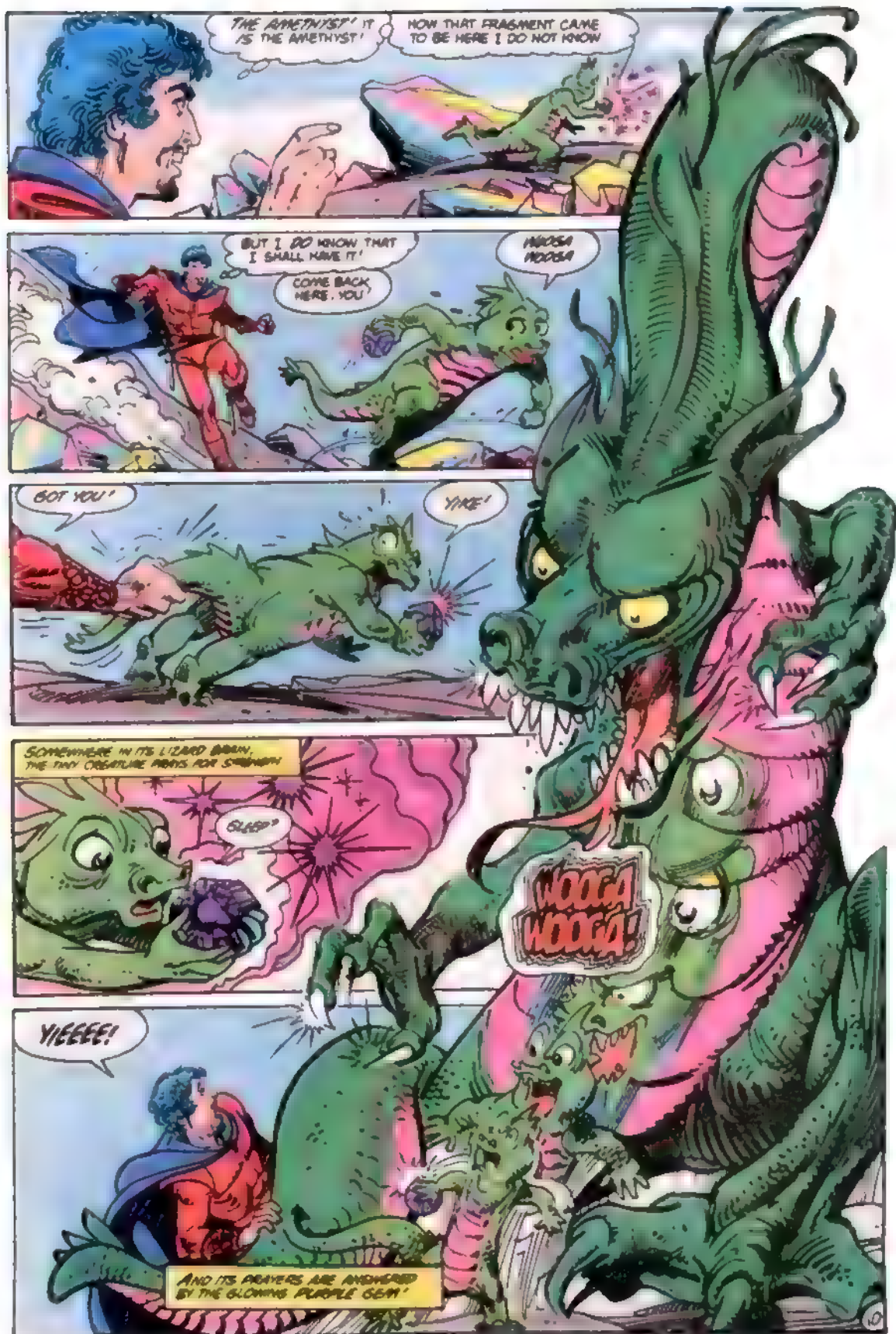
DONE
ALREADY?

YOU HARRY
DWELLERS
MOVE
QUICKLY!









THE AMETHYST! IT IS THE AMETHYST!

NOW THAT FRAGMENT CAME TO BE HERE I DO NOT KNOW

BUT I DO KNOW THAT I SHALL HAVE IT!

COME BACK HERE, YOU!

WOOGA WOOGA

GOT YOU!

YIEE!

SOMEWHERE IN ITS LIZARD BRAIN, THE TINY CREATURE PRAYS FOR SOMETHING

SLEEP!

WOOGA WOOGA!

YIEEEE!

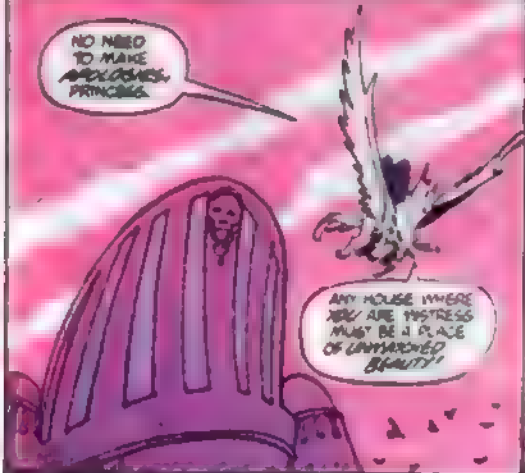
AND ITS PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED BY THE GLOWING PURPLE GEM!



UNAWARE OF THE BIZARRE EVENTS AT FORTRESS ORAL, THEY GO ON THEIR OWN WAYS, THINKING THEMSELVES A MAGIC SPELL...

THEY TELL ME CASTLE AMETHYST WAS FAR MORE GLORIOUS WHEN MY PARENTS WERE ALIVE!

BUT SINCE DARK ORAL KILLED THEM



NO NEED TO MAKE APPOLOGUES, PRINCESS.

ANY HOUSE WHERE YOU ARE MUSTRESS MUST BE A PLACE OF UNMATCHED BEAUTY!



MY CHILD WELCOME BACK!

HI, CITRINA. LORD GARNET WASN'T GONE TOO LONG, WAS HE?

YOUR REST WAS WELL DESERVED, MY DEAR-- AND GAVE US TIME TO GATHER TOGETHER YOUR LOYAL ALLIES!



AMETHYST, I PLEDGE ONCE MORE MY LIFE'S BLOOD TO YOUR CAUSE!

MY SON AND NEER, STAY WITH US ALSO!

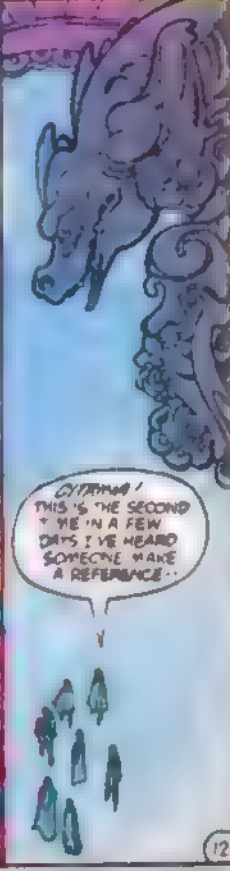
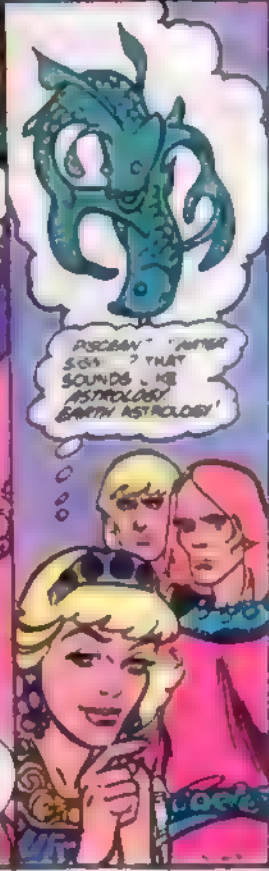
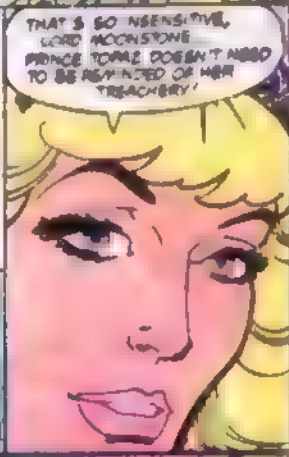
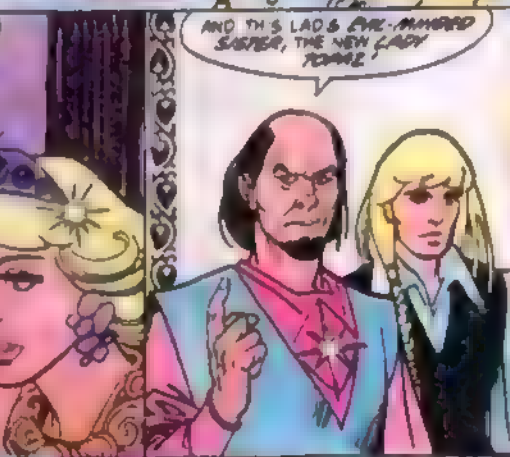
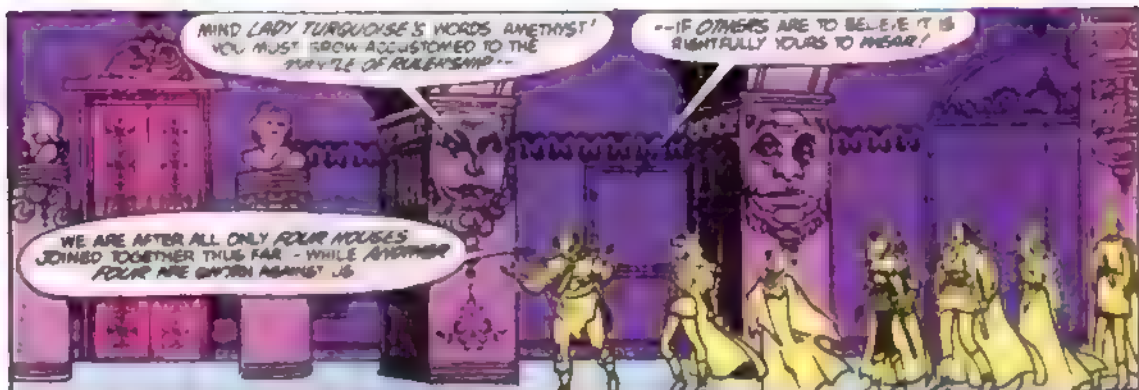
LORD MOONSTONE, PLEASE GET UP

THIS IS SO EMBARRASSING!



BUT PRINCESS YOU ARE OUR LEADER AND OUR LIGHT! WE ARE YOURS TO COMMAND TILL VICTORY OR DEATH!

DO NOT DENY US OUR FLAVOR!



--THAT SOUNDS LIKE IT
RELATES TO EARTH--

THEN PERHAPS APOTHEIST,
IT IS TIME YOU LEARNED
THE TRUTH--

--OF THE
GEMWORLD'S
CHOICES--

GAZE WITH ME,
CHILD INTO THE
WELL OF KNOWLEDGE!

IT LOOKS
LIKE STARS
IN THERE--
AND

.. EARTH

EARTH AS IT WAS
MANY CENTURIES AGO

AT A TIME WHEN HUMANS
LIVED AMONGST ELVES
AND FAIRIES

AND AT A TIME..

OF CELESTIAL
CHOICES

TODAY YOU WOULD
CALL IT-- A SUPER-
NOVA

THOSE WHO WERE ATTUNED TO
THE MYSTIC RHYTHMS OF THE
UNIVERSE WERE HORRORSTRUCK

"FOR THEY KNEW AT ONCE THAT THIS GREAT ASTRONOMICAL
EVENT HAD TREMENDOUS ASTROLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE AS WELL!"

"THE STAR'S EXPLOSION HAD CRUCIALLY ALTERED THE MOMENTARY
CONSTELLATIONS THAT RULED THEIR MYSTIC ABILITIES--"

"-- AND COMMUNITIES OF MAGICAL
AWARETS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD NOW
FEARED FOR THEIR VERY EXISTENCE!"

BUT THERE WAS ONE AMONG THEM
WHOSE MAGIC STONE AND WHOSE SPIRIT
HAD BEEN ESPECIALLY PREPARED FOR
SUCH A TIME.

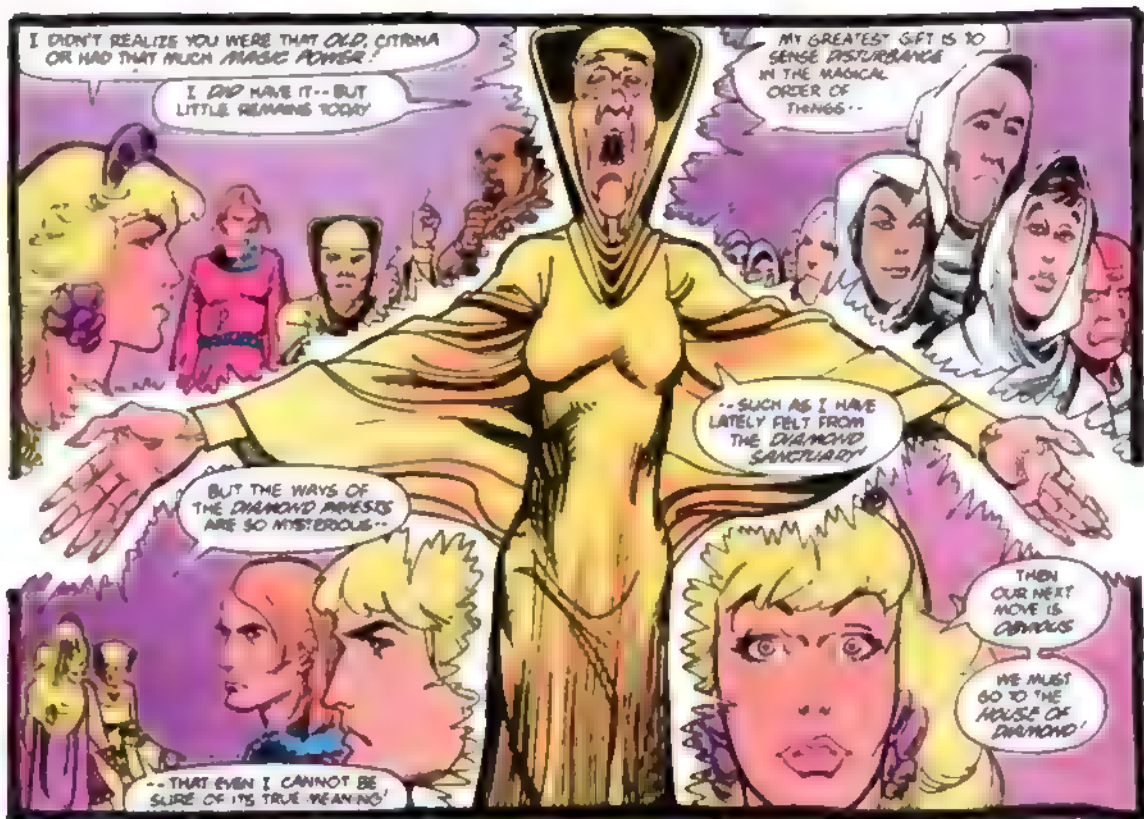
"ONE WHOSE POWER
WOULD COME ALIVE
ONLY WHEN THE
TWELVE GREAT MAGIC
HOUSES FICED
CATASTROPHE!"

"I WAS
THAT ONE."

AND USING A POWER GREATER THAN ANY
ONE PERSON HAD EVER WIELDED, I FOUND
THIS WORLD AND LED MY PEOPLE TO THEIR
REFUGE.

"...TO THE GENWORLD!"

"WITH US CAME FIRST QUANTITIES OF MAGIC FROM THE EARTH DIMENSION
AND MANY OF THE CREATURES FOR WHOM SUCH MAGIC WAS THEIR SUSTENANCE!"



I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE THAT OLD, CITRINA OR HAD THAT MUCH MAGIC POWER!

I DID HAVE IT-- BUT LITTLE REMAINS TODAY

MY GREATEST GIFT IS TO SENSE DISTURBANCE IN THE MAGICAL ORDER OF THINGS--

--SUCH AS I HAVE LATELY FELT FROM THE DIAMOND SANCTUARY!

BUT THE WAYS OF THE DIAMOND PRIESTS ARE SO MYSTERIOUS--

--THAT EVEN I CANNOT BE SURE OF ITS TRUE MEANING!

THEN OUR NEXT MOVE IS OBVIOUS

WE MUST GO TO THE HOUSE OF DIAMOND!

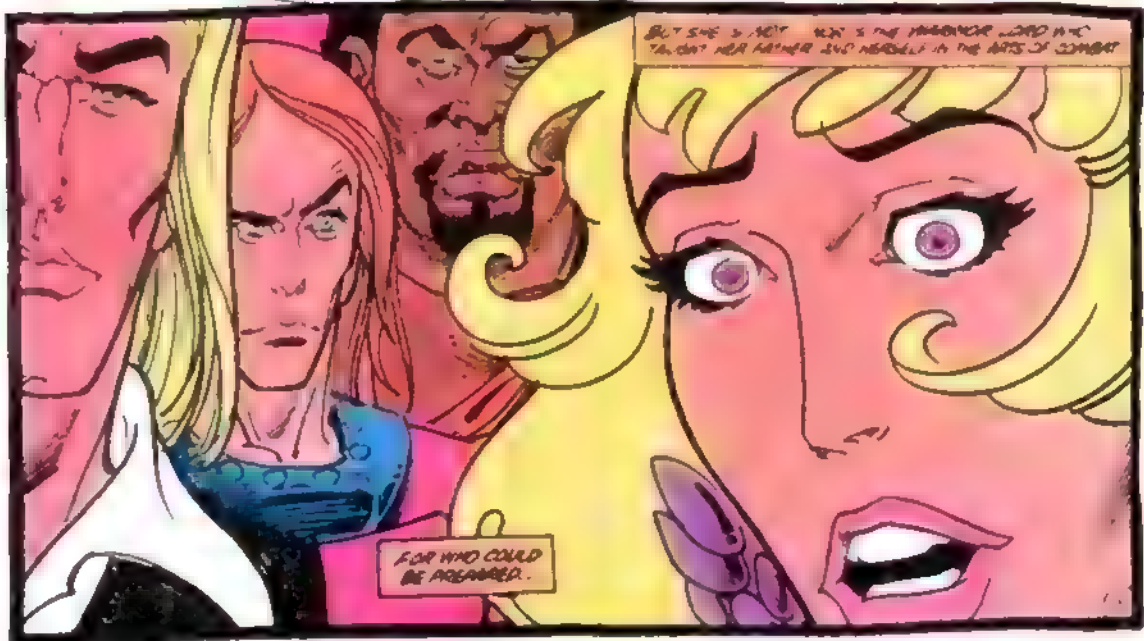
AND NOT LONG AFTER...

I UNDERSTAND, LORD GARNET... AND I'M READY!

YOURS WILL BE THE HARDEST TASK, PRINCESS.

I KNOW NOT WHAT DANGERS LIE AHEAD BUT YOU MUST SHOW ONLY COURAGE AND VALOR IN FACING THEM--

--IF YOU ARE TO CONVINCE THE DIAMOND PRIESTS TO JOIN YOUR CAUSE!



BUT SHE DID NOT KNOW THE HARBINGER LORD HAD TAUGHT HER FATHER AND HERSELF IN THE ARTS OF COMBAT

FOR WHO COULD BE PREPARED.

TO GREET THE DESTRUCTIVE AFTERMATH OF
A VISIT FROM THE EMBASSIES OF WAR?

WHO... WHO COULD
HAVE DONE THIS?

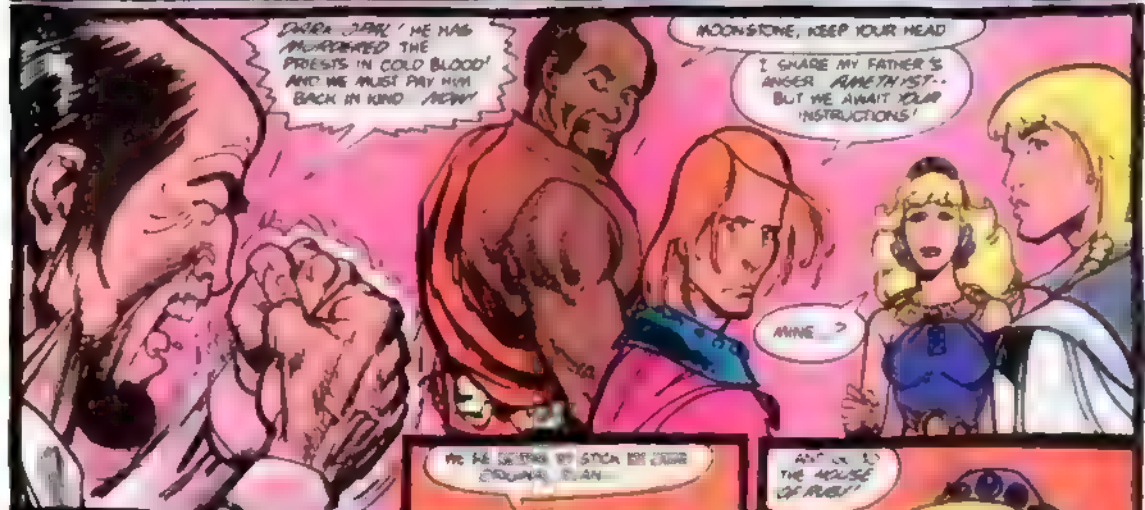


DEAR LORD! HE HAS
MURDERED THE
PRIESTS IN COLD BLOOD!
AND WE MUST PAY HIM
BACK IN KIND NOW!

MOONSTONE, KEEP YOUR HEAD

I SHARE MY FATHER'S
ANGER AMETHYST...
BUT WE AWAIT YOUR
INSTRUCTIONS!

MINE?



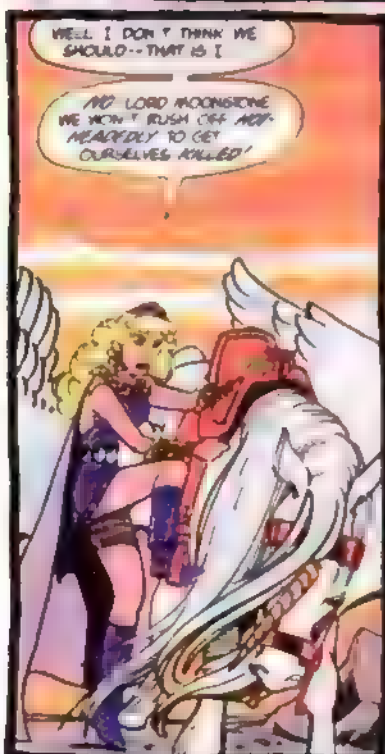
WE ARE LISTENING TO YOU, LORD MOONSTONE.

AND TO THE
HOUSE OF RUIN!



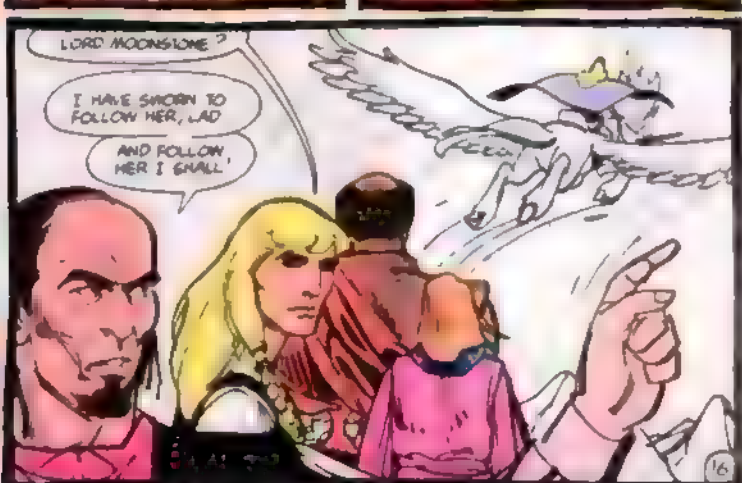
WELL I DON'T THINK WE
SHOULD-- THAT IS I

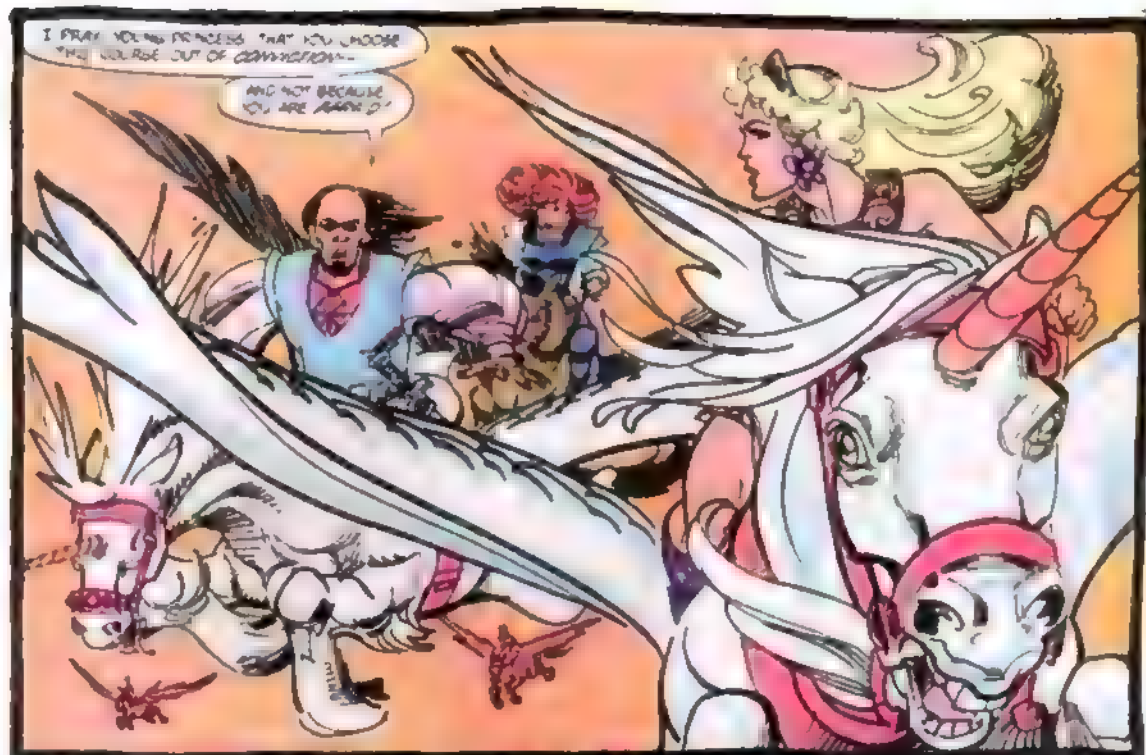
AND LORD MOONSTONE
WE WON'T RUSH OFF NOW.
HEARDLY TO GET
OURSELVES KILLED!



LORD MOONSTONE?

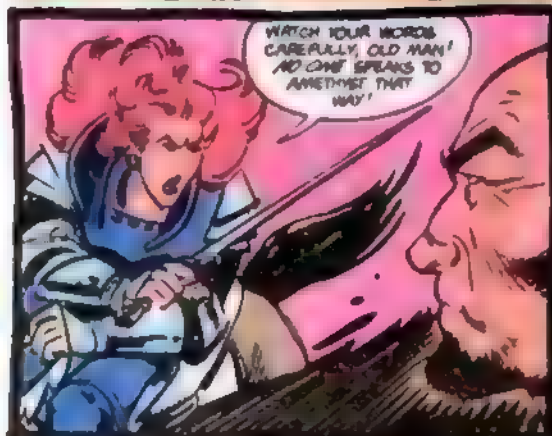
I HAVE SWORN TO
FOLLOW HER, LORD
AND FOLLOW
HER I SHALL!



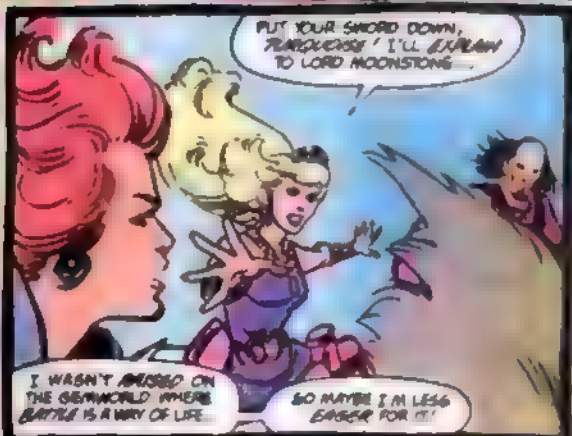


I PRAY YOUR PRINCESS THAT YOU CHOOSE
THE COURSE OUT OF CONVICTION--

AND NOT BECAUSE
YOU ARE AFRAID!



WATCH YOUR WORDS
CAREFULLY, OLD MAN!
NO ONE SPEAKS TO
ANYTHING THAT
WAY!



PUT YOUR SWORD DOWN,
PRINCESS! I'LL EXPLAIN
TO LORD MOONSTONE.

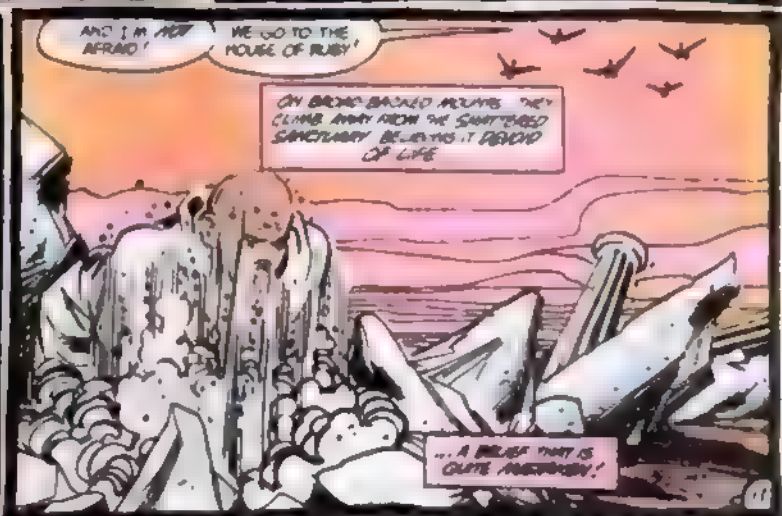
I WASN'T ABUSED ON
THE GEMWORLD WHERE
BATTLE IS A WAY OF LIFE.

SO MAYBE I'M LESS
EASIER FOR IT!



BUT I DO KNOW WHAT I'M DOING.
MAYBE BETTER THAN THE REST OF
YOU WHO'VE LIVED WITH YOUR
AFTRID OF DARK OVAL FOR
SO LONG.

AM, YOU
ARE AS WISE
AS YOUR
MOTHER,
ANYTHING.



AND I'M NOT
AFRAID!

WE GO TO THE
HOUSE OF RUBY!

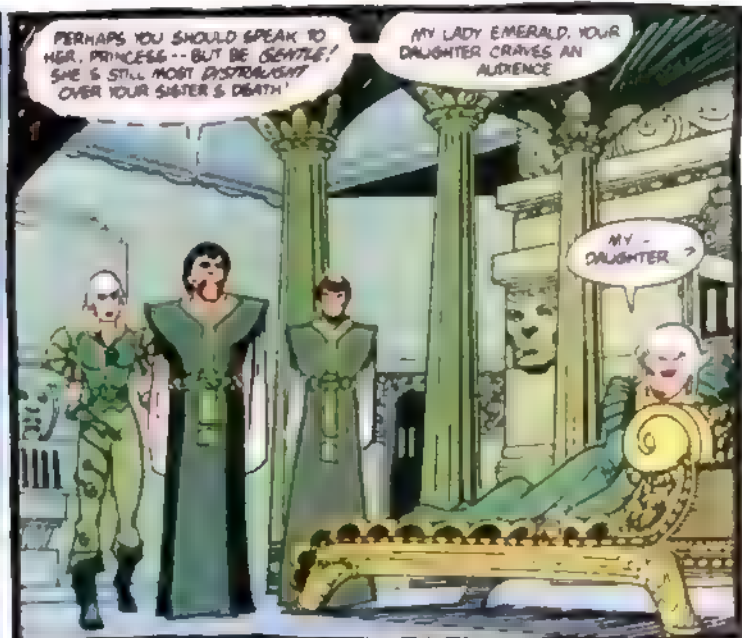
ON BEING-BACKED MOUNTAINS THEY
CLIMB AWAY FROM THE SHATTERED
SANCTUARY BELIEVING IT DIVINE
OF LIFE.

...A BELIEF THAT IS
QUITE ANOTHER!



AND WHILE HE STAY IN MYERS
AMONG THE SHARDS AND RUBBLE
OF THE PRISTINE ROSE SEEDS
WAS TO BE A KINGDOM WITH A
PLACE THAT'S NEWBORN LAY
SCOTTED

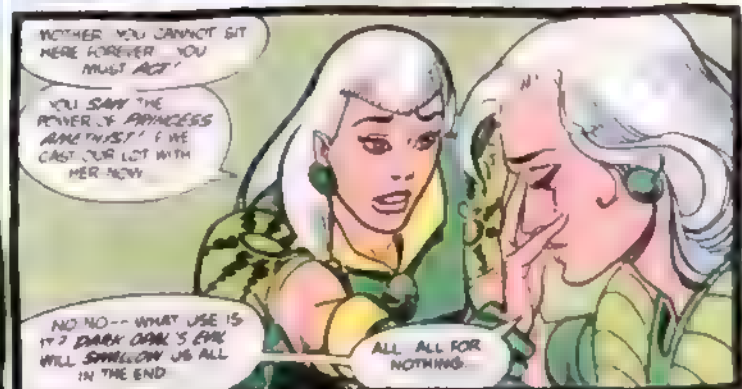
THE SHADOWS OF
DEATH ARE A LITTLE
THE DARKNESS
JOURNAL



PERHAPS YOU SHOULD SPEAK TO
HER, PRINCESS-- BUT BE GENTLE!
SHE'S STILL MOST DISTRAUGHT
OVER YOUR SISTER'S DEATH!

MY LADY EMERALD, YOUR
DAUGHTER CRAVES AN
AUDIENCE

MY -
DAUGHTER?

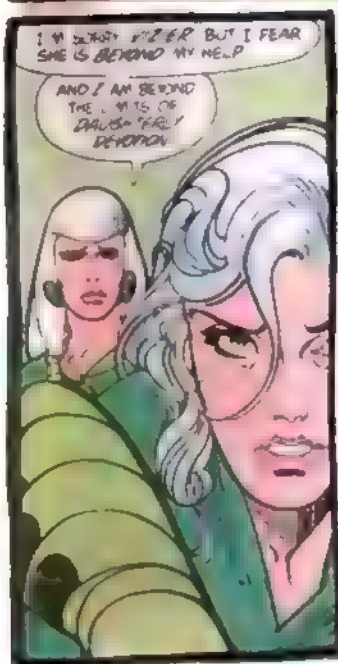


MOTHER YOU CANNOT SIT
HERE FOREVER. YOU
MUST ACT!

YOU SAY THE
POWER OF PRINCESSES
ARE TRUST? I'VE
CAST OUR LOT WITH
HER NOW.

NO NO-- WHAT USE IS
IT? DARK DARK'S EYE
WILL SWALLOW US ALL
IN THE END

ALL ALL FOR
NOTHING



I'M WORRY FIERCE BUT I FEAR
SHE IS BEYOND MY HELP

AND I AM BEYOND
THE WAYS OF
DARK DARK'S
DEVOTION



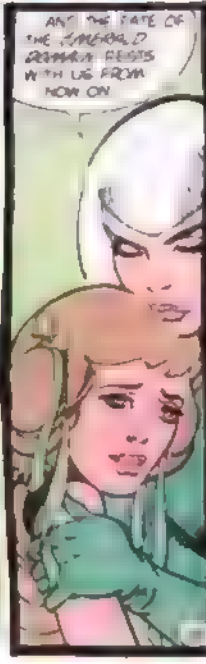
TEND TO HER AS BEST
YOU CAN

BUT SOMEONE
IN THIS HOUSE
MUST ACT
DECISIVELY!



SISTER? SISTER IS
MOTHER ANY BETTER?

MOTHER IS
STILL ILL, MY
DARLING



AND THE FATE OF
THE EMERALD
DWARF REIGNS
WITH US FROM
NOW ON



MEANWHILE FAR FROM THE HOME OF GREEN MASK AMETHYST AND HER BAND OF NOBLES HEAR YET ANOTHER JEW NOISE

THE THAT HAS LOST THE LUSTRE OF ITS ANCIENT DAYS

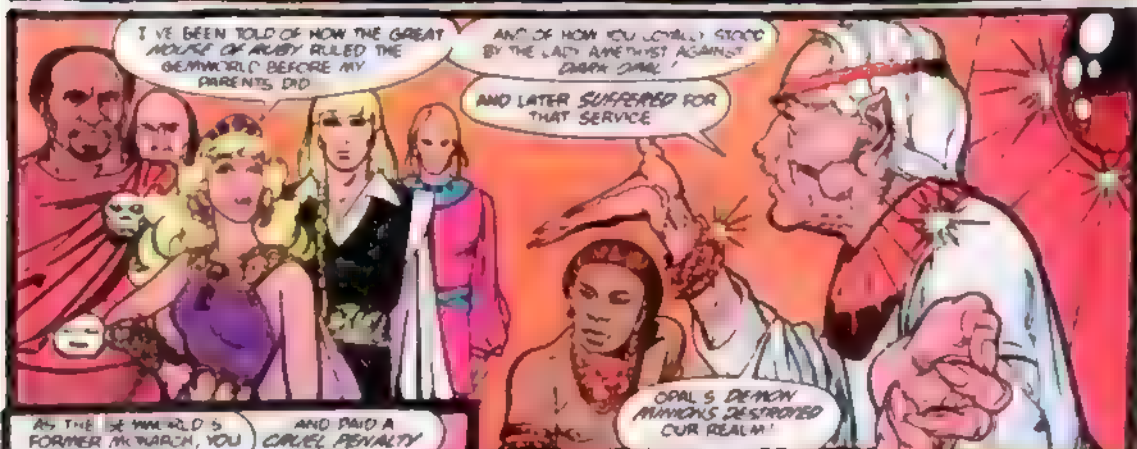
ONCE PROUD AND MIGHTY TODAY THIS PLACE IS CALLED THE RUBI PLAINS



GREETINGS LORD RUBI I AM AMETHYST

NO ONE WHO KNEW YOUR MOTHER COULD DOUBT IT

WHAT CAN AN OLD MAN SUCH AS MYSELF DO FOR YOU PRINCESS?



I'VE BEEN TOLD OF HOW THE GREAT NOBLE OF RUBI RULED THE GEMWORLD BEFORE MY PARENTS DID

AND OF HOW YOU LOYALLY STOOD BY THE LADY AMETHYST AGAINST DARK DARK!

AND LATER SUFFERED FOR THAT SERVICE

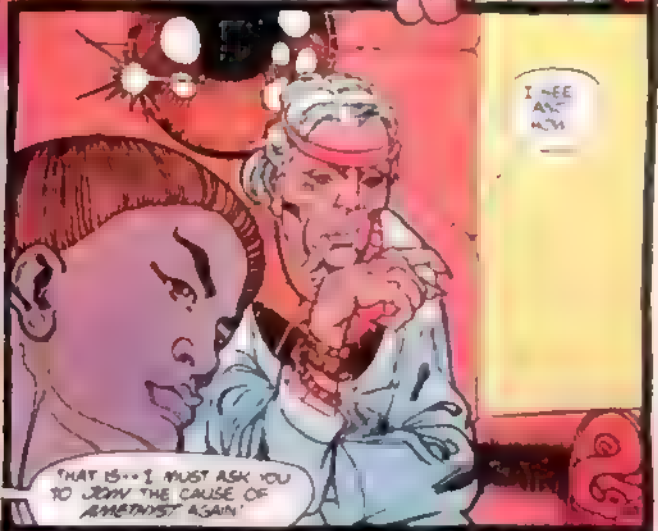
OFAL'S DEMON ANIMONS DESTROYED OUR REALM!



AT THE DE WARMER'S FORMER MARCH, YOU WERE A THREAT TO HIS REIGN

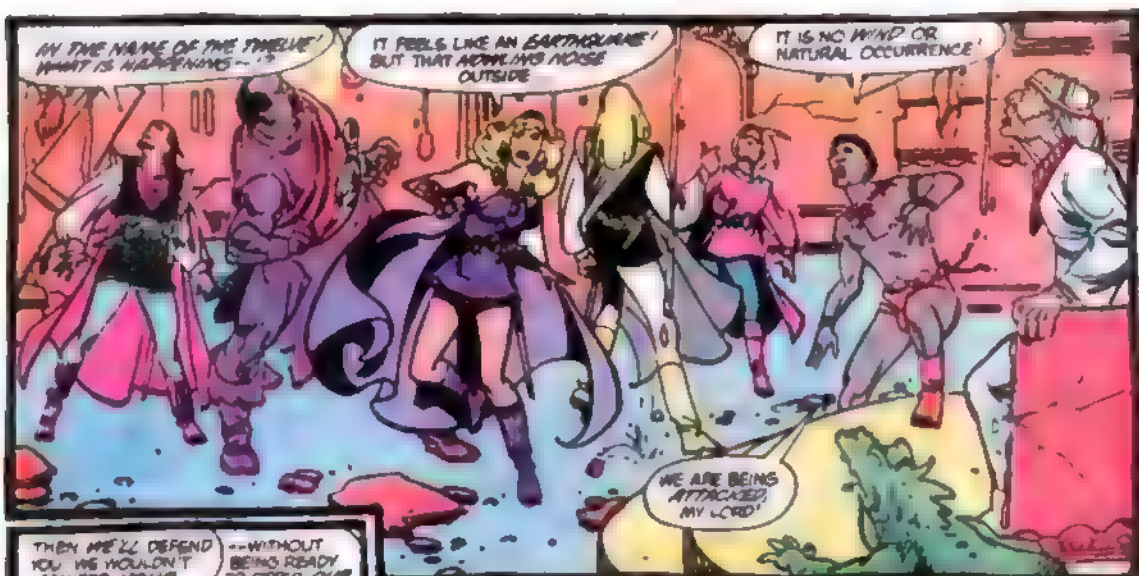
AND PAID A CRUEL PENALTY FOR IT!

BUT NOW I MUST ASK YOU TO SERVE



I SEE ARE NOW

THAT IS--I MUST ASK YOU TO JOIN THE CAUSE OF AMETHYST AGAIN!



IN THE NAME OF THE SKY!
WHAT IS HAPPENING?!

IT FEELS LIKE AN EARTHQUAKE!
BUT THAT NOISE IS NOISE
OUTSIDE

IT IS NO WIND OR
NATURAL OCCURRENCE!

WE ARE BEING
ATTACKED!
MY LORD!



THEN WE'LL DEFEND
YOU! WE WOULDN'T
ASK FOR HEAVEN
RESISTANCE...

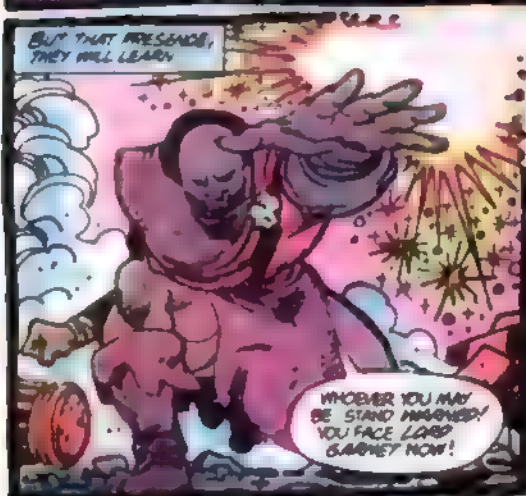
---WITHOUT
BEING READY TO OFFER OUR
OWN!

LET'S
GO!



THE ALPS RUSH OUTSIDE EXPECTING
TO BE MET BY GREAT BEHEMOTHS
OR SOME OTHER THUNDERING
MONSTER

...NOT BY THE SILENT PRESENCE
OF THREE LOVELY HOODED
FIGURES!



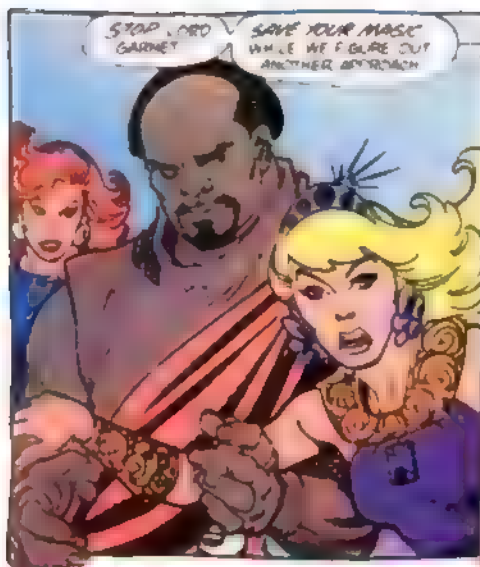
BUT THAT PRESENCE,
THEY WILL LEARN

WHOMEVER YOU MAY
BE STAND FORTH!
YOU FACE LORD
GARNET NOW!



IS MARCH
ENOUGH?

BY MY STONE! IT
SEEMS TO EAT MY
VERY MAGIC AND
REMAIN UNHARMED!

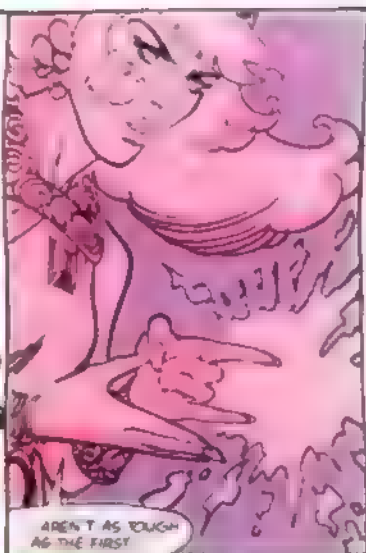


STOP, OR
GARNET

SAVE YOUR MASC
WHILE WE FIGURE OUT
ANOTHER APPROACH



THEY'RE KEEPING THEIR
GROUND, NOT GOING IN
THE DIRECTION OF
THE OTHER TWO



AREN'T AS TOUGH
AS THE FIRST



BOOM



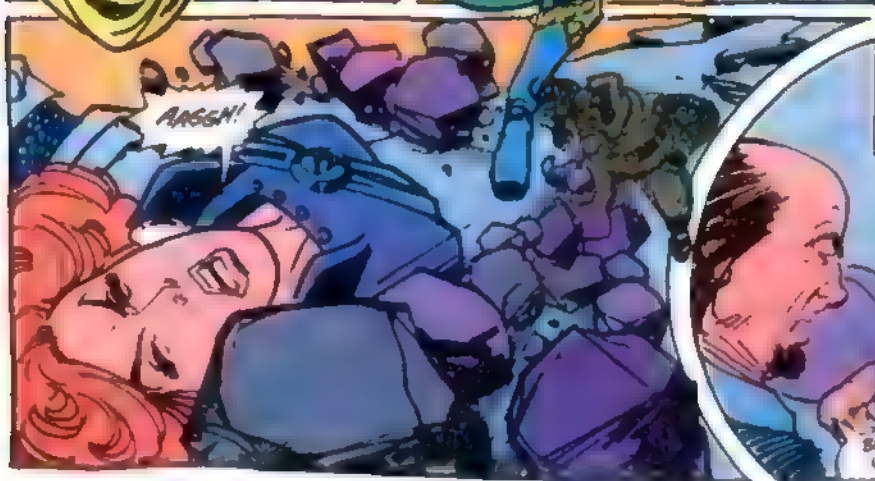
TOUGH
ENOUGH TO
TAKE THAT
SALVO
ANOTHER



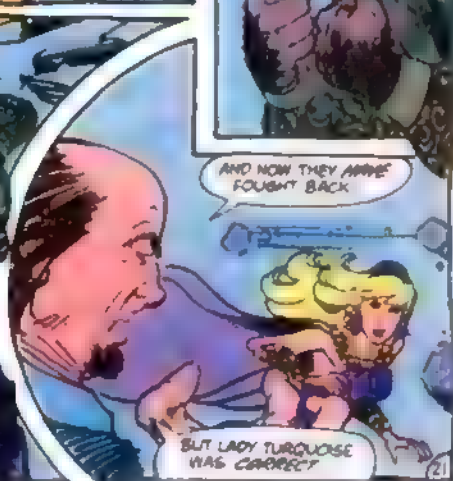
BUT STILL, THEY'RE
NOT FIGHTING BACK

IF WE "ARE" OUR
AREA IS RIGHT TO
THEM WE--

TAHOOM



AAGGH!



AND NOW THEY HAVE
FOUGHT BACK

BUT LADY TURQUOISE
WAS CORRECT





Purple Prose

Dear Editor,

When *Amethyst* began I thought, "How simplistic, good versus evil, and Opal versus Amethyst: 12 issues of battles between the two. YAWN!!!!" Well gang, I'm wide awake and pleasantly surprised. Here's why: Granch is out to lead his brothers against their father, Dark Opal, the Diamond people won't interfere for risking their purity, the Emerald Mother gave her oldest daughter to Dark Opal and now greatly regrets it, Carnelian isn't too happy either, he also has to deal with his "father's" constant disappointment. Amy's parents are rapidly approaching a confrontation with a reality that could have devastating effects on their family and lastly, Prince Topaz is bequeathed to Lady Sapphire, but loves Amethyst. If you are able to tie all this up in a mere 12 issues I will be surprised again. As of this writing you only have 7 issues left to do so, and you can be sure that I will be there when you do.

My thanks for listening.
Adam Burchess
1315 Morris Rd.
Apt. 24-C
Durham, NC 27705

And my thanks for writing, Adam. If you think we've already introduced a lot of supporting jeweled characters, just a little tight, 'cause we've got plenty of more sub-plots in the works!

Dear Folks,

This mag is great! Why not run *Amethyst* on a permanent basis? There are hundreds of people out here, myself included, who would do each other dirt to get hold of this book.

One of the main reasons I like this book as well as I do is the fact that you have taken one of the oldest, most tired plots and made it so fascinating. I mean, the bit about "teenage-girl-discovers-she's-a-princess-goes-off-to-fight-bad-guys" is one of the oldest in history.

The bits and pieces of Amy that are thrown into *Amethyst* have got to be my favorites. "She's a child psychologist" is the best one I've heard so far.

Do something with *Amethyst*. Don't let her collapse into limbo at the end of this run. Either give her a second-maxi-series or (please, please, please) give her her own book. On a permanent basis.

Until Dark Opal sleeps with a teddy bear.

Mary Reeves
1810 Morton St.
Lafayette, IN 47904

Hey guys,

All right! Great! Fantastic! These were my thoughts as I read page after page of *Amethyst* #5, "Battlegrounds". At the end, however, frustration overcame me as I realized I would have to wait another month to see how Herb and Marion Winston react to their daughter's "skeleton in the closet." It seems to me from here on out that Amy will have to forget about school and the public since everyone knows her identity. But, knowing how you all at DC can work miracles, I'm not too worried. And what will the outcome be of Princess Emerald's death?

Once again, congrats! Thanks for a great comic!

Scott Tillman
Route 1 Box 338AA
Warren, Arizona 71671

Dear Editor:

"Battlegrounds" shifted the focus of this epic unexpectedly to earth, Amy's "real world" of school and parents. The intrusion of Granch & Co. onto the scene and Amy's mother's reaction to them (a kind of mothering mixed with counseling?) provided some needed relief from the desperate drama that is unfolding on Gemworld—Dark Opal's conquests and ruthlessness.

Both plot and art maintain high quality established in the

first four issues. I look forward to the next installments with eagerness and enthusiasm!

Sincerely,
David Mercury
Toledo, OH

We're all very happy with the way "Battlegrounds" worked out, David, especially me. I do admit that when Dan and Gary briefly told me many, many months ago that they wanted to do a story with Granch and his strange siblings spilling through the ceiling of Amy Winston's classroom, I was a little reticent about the idea. But, the creative team did such a good convincing job with this issue, I was not at all regretful. In fact, Amethyst #5 happens to be my favorite among the first five so far!

And one more thing, David, please send your letters to each comic on separate sheets of paper. Since different editors and writers handle most of the columns, it makes it a lot easier for everyone involved. Thanks for writing!

Dear Karen,

It's nearly six in the morning and I've just finished reading *Amethyst* #5. Yes, I keep odd hours! Anyway, when I first read the *Amethyst* preview, I was a little bored when I was done. But since the first issue, every month following has brought *Amethyst* closer to my heart. She is truly a splendid character and you people are just doing the greatest job with her. The best to date is issue #5, and the best part, the goings on in the classroom! I've been reading since I was nine, and while in school would daydream about being a hero and such things as page seven happening! So let me tell you, it was a treat! As far as DC goes, my favorite heroines are Wonder Woman and Supergirl, but believe it or not, *Amethyst* has just about surpassed them.

Lastly, I was very happy to hear that there is a good chance that *Amethyst* will return after issue twelve. I think that after about a year hiatus it would be super to bring Gemworld back, fresh and ready for another run! Please consider it more! Thank you very much for the time.

Very sincerely,
Peter Logan
Los Angeles, CA

Previews are probably the most awkward stories that a writer has to write, Peter, because he has to tell you something about the character and the series without giving away too much before the first issue. But, if you go back and take a look at the preview now, you'd most likely enjoy it a lot more.

Dear Purple Prose,

Wow! Great! I guess I'm a little late but I just read my first *Amethyst*, #5, and I plan to get them all. I'm disappointed that *Amethyst* is only a mini-series because I want to see more of Amy and her Gemworld friends. The artwork is absolutely terrific. Amy-Amethyst looks beautiful. However, I feel sorry for Amy's parents, who have to give up their daughter, and for her dog, Taffy, who has to wait patiently for her. I also think you should call your column "Lavender Letters."

Stay purple,
Stephanie Duennabier
1920 Bertram Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96816

Dear Challengers to Opal's Reign,

All in all, I found *Amethyst* #5 very good. Prince Topaz is very handsome, but his sister, Princess Topaz, and her friend Lady Sapphire, give me the creeps. They are too much like "Morgan LeFay Sisters."

A connection between Opal and Rita is very interesting. I liked the way Marion handled Granch's brother. Keep up the good work.

Andreas Brown
308 S. Andre
Sag, MI 48602

Next month: It's Amethyst and her allies against the Emissaries of Vorn!

See you then...Karen

MEANWHILE.

WARNING: Reading this column may be hazardous to your comic reading enjoyment. If you are a purist and reject the notion that comics are a business as well as an entertainment form, please turn the page now. If you are up to facing reality, read on and let's get on with the business at hand. Consider:

Dear Mr. Giordano,

I have just read a newsletter that had in it the usual info on new comics, conventions, all the information fit to print. While reading it, I stumbled across a paragraph mentioning that both Marvel and DC and the independents, are coming out with more and more titles in special formats (baxter-paper, mando, graphic novels, and mini-series). The prices of these special formats range from 25¢ all the way up to an appalling \$5.95 for a graphic novel. But what I want to discuss is reports that over the summer regular 60¢ comics are going to be hiked up to 75¢. This is totally shocking. Wasn't it only a few years that comics were hiked up to 60¢ along with raising the prices of 75¢ special comics up to a dollar or more? Now up to 75¢! Will that simultaneously raise the prices of comics which were \$1.00 to an appalling \$1.50? If this goes through think of all the people who won't be able to afford comics... people like me, who have no job and still living on my allowance. With these new prices I am going to have to drastically cut back on the number of titles I get, including many DC's, not just me but other underage collectors, who depend on their parents for money to buy 75¢ comic books the parents' reaction will be one of negativeness with the parent bawling the child out because of the lack of money or because comics are for little kids!

There are also those who have jobs and collect comics, but now with the recession, layoffs and lesser jobs, it is harder to make ends meet while at the same time, collect comics. Now that prices are going up they might cut down on the amount of titles they get each month.

I know it might be hard to keep the prices down, but there are ways of

keeping prices down, while at the same time coming out with new comics, such as purchasing your own paper company or printing company. The question I bring up is, is raising prices worth it, gaining more income at the cost of the consumer? Also I would like to ask the people whether or not they want a price hike and ask them to write in with their opinions on the subject. Please think about this since it is the people who buy what you make, and without us, there go comics! Sincerely,
D'Romei Valencia
(No address given)

I understand and sympathize with your frustration, D'Romei. Although your cries of anguish ring with truth, the assumptions on which they are based are, at best, inaccurate. I think it fair to say that price increases are inevitable for nearly all goods and services and a price increase such as you've heard about is a certainty. I know I cannot make you like a boost in the cost of comics but I think I should like to give you some facts that, at least, will help you to understand why price increases imposed by any company are made. I assure you that "gaining income at the cost of the consumer" is seldom, if ever, a major factor.

FACT: Regular comic book prices have not increased in the last two years despite an inflation rate that has driven up the cost of just about everything else your family (and DC Comics) buys. Probably the working members of your family have received wage increases during that same period.

FACT: When the cost of producing a product or delivering a service comes so close to the money received for selling that product or service, a company typically exercises one or more of three basic options:

1. Raise the price of its product or service
2. Lower the cost of producing its product or service
3. Discontinue operations (go out of that business)

Let's examine these options in reverse order.

OPTION 3: Would you, or our other readers, interests best be served by discontinuing publication of comics? I think not.

OPTION 2: Not totally within our control. Inflation has driven up the cost of the goods needed to publish comics. The cost of paper, for example, is a major uncontrollable expense.

● **Negotiated wage increases** for engravers and printers are not within our control. Our creative people also come in for their share of rate increases in the past two years. Art and script rates up 30 to 40%; reprint rates up a booming 400%; royalty payments didn't exist two years ago now they take a hefty bite of DC's profit margin. You might feel that DC has more control of creative/editorial increases than those that are imposed from "outside", but DC must pay its creative people competitively or it's back to option 3.

FACT: Did you know that DC Comics receives only about 25¢ on average, of the 60¢ you spend for a comic? The rest is split in some fashion between the wholesaler or distributor and the retailer. Without this selling commission the comics simply wouldn't reach comic shops or newsstands. This 25¢ has to pay for the efforts of the: 1) Writer 2) Artist 3) Letterers 4) Colorists 5) Editor 6) Production Staff 7) Sales and Promotion Staff 8) Engraver 9) Paper Supplier 10) Printer 11) Office Staff 12) Shippers. What's left over, if anything, (after paying overhead costs), is profit for DC Comics.

And "buying" our own paper mills or printing plants would cost more in the short term (the cost would be in the millions of dollars) and wouldn't guarantee long-term savings. In fact we used to own our own presses decades ago and sold them to hold our prices down.

Perhaps you are beginning to grasp the complexity of the situation? Seeking a "vote" to see how many people "want" a price increase is futile. No one "wants" a price increase... not you, not me, not DC Comics. If there were a way to decrease prices and still make a fair profit DC Comics would take that way! A price increase will occur only when we can no longer hold the line on the current prices and not before.

OPTION 1: Seems to be our only way out. If anyone could discover a better solution, it would be used joyfully and quickly.

A final word in defense of a "Fair Profit". Any company that does not make a fair profit will be unable to improve its product or service. Any company that makes no profit will cease to exist.

Thank you and Good Afternoon.

Dick